COLLECTOR'S CORNER NO. 97 OCTOBER 1, 1976
JIM WHIPKEY

ROCK MAN OF GEORGIA
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: AND NOW, COLLECTOR'S CORNER, THE VOICE OF AMERICA SERIES OF PROGRAMS FOR LISTENERS WHO COLLECT THINGS, WHETHER THEY BE BOTTLES OR BALLS, STAMPS OR STRING. THIS WEEK'S REPORT, PREPARED BY JIM WHIPKEY, TELLS US OF A MAN IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA WHO COLLECTS ROCKS, ALL KIND OF ROCKS GENERALLY, BUT WITH A SPECIAL FONDNESS FOR ONE PARTICULAR KIND OF ROCK.

VOICE: FOR SHEER SIZE AND WEIGHT IN COLLECTIONS, OSCAR ROBERTSON SHOULD WIN SOME SORT OF PRIZE. HE COLLECTS ROCKS, MILLIONS OF THEM, AND THAT'S NO EXAGGERATION. ROBERT LIVES IN THE TINY NORTH GEORGIA MOUNTAIN TOWN OF BALL GROUND, A ONE-STREET VILLAGE SITTING ON TOP OF SOME OF THE WORLD'S MOST UNUSUAL ROCKS. ROBERTSON HAS THOUSANDS OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF ROCKS, BUT HIS PARTICULAR PASSION IS SOMETHING CALLED STAUROLITE, COMMONLY CALLED FAIRY CROSSES. THEY ARE FORMED IN CALCITE BOULDERS AND ARE CALLED FAIRY CROSSES BECAUSE NATURE HAS ETCHED THE FORM OF A CROSS IN THE STAUROLITE. ROBERTSON HAS LEARNED THAT HIS FASCINATION WITH ROCKS IS SHARED BY OTHERS.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- ROBERTSON

"WELL, I ENJOY COLLECTING ROCKS. IT STARTED OUT AS A HOBBY AND IT'S TURNED OUT TO BE A BUSINESS. A BIG BUSINESS. AND WE MAKE A LIVING FROM IT. KIDS ENJOY IT AND IT'S FASCINATING TO ME. IT'S FASCINATING TO A LOT OF OTHER PEOPLE."

VOICE: OSCAR ROBERTSON NOT ONLY COLLECTS ROCKS, HE ALSO DISPLAYS AND SELLS THEM, IN FOUR CONNECTING STORES IN BALL GROUND,

VOICE: (CONT) GEORGIA. THE STORES AND SURROUNDING LAND ARE FULL OF ROCKS, MANY OF THEM ORDINARY BOULDERS, BUT MANY HAVE BEEN POLISHED AND CUT. SOME ARE DISPLAYED IN A NATURAL STATE WITH UNUSUAL GEOMETRIC DESIGNS.

THE LARGEST SINGLE COLLECTION ROBERTSON HAS IS STAUROLITE. HE CLAIMS HIS HOME AREA IS THE BEST SOURCE OF THE ROCK AND ONE OF THE FEW PLACES IN THE WORLD WHERE STAUROLITE CAN BE FOUND.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- ROBERTSON

"STAUROLITE IS VERY UNCOMMON AND BALL GROUND HAS THE BEST STAUROLITE IN THE WORLD. AND THERE ARE ONLY A FEW OTHER PLACES IN THE WORLD THAT HAVE IT. AND WHAT THEY HAVE DOESN'T EVEN COMPARE IN QUALITY WITH WHAT BALL GROUND HAS."

VOICE: THE LOVE AFFAIR BETWEEN OSCAR ROBERTSON AND ROCKS DOESN'T END WITH HIS COLLECTION. HE HAS BEGUN WORK ON A MUSEUM, THE WORLD'S FIRST STAUROLITE MUSEUM.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- ROBERTSON

"IT'LL BE ABOUT FIFTY ACRES (20 HECTARES) AND THERE'LL BE ABOUT TEN MILLION PIECES OF ROCK DISPLAYED. THAT'LL INCLUDE THE STAUROLITE, THE GARNET, THE TURMALINE, AND EVERYTHING. THERE'LL PROBABLY BE ABOUT 100 THOUSAND CHUNKS. THAT'LL BE CHUNKS WEIGHING ANDYWHERE FROM 1000 POUNDS (460 KILOGRAMS) TO 100 TONS (90 METRIC TONS)"

VOICE: WHEN ROBERTSON SAYS CHUNKS, HE MEANS HUGE SLABS OF ROCK WHICH WEIGH AS MUCH AS 100 TONS, AND CAN BE MOVED ONLY WITH THE AID OF A HEAVY DUTY FORK LIFT MACHINE.

THE POTENTIAL MUSEUM IS ON A MOUNTAIN TOP IN A CLEARING, WITH THE CALCITE-BEARING ROCKS WHICH PRODUCE STAUROLITE PERCHED ATOP LARGE SLABS OF MARBLE, ANOTHER ROCK WHICH CAN BE FOUND IN THE NORTH GEORGIA MOUNTAINS.

VOICE: (CONT) BECAUSE OF THE CROSS SHAPE FOUND IN STAUROLITE, MANY CONSIDER STAUROLITE LUCKY. ROBERTSON WAS ASKED ABOUT THAT.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- ROBERTSON

"WELL, IT'S LIKE THIS. I'VE CARRIED THEM AROUND 42 YEARS, PROMOTING THE ROCK BUSINESS. GOT TWO HERE IN MY POCKET NOW. IT'S BEEN MIGHTY GOOD (FOR ME) IN THE PAST SO I'M GOING TO CONTINUED TO CARRY THE STAUROLITE AS A GOOD LUCK TOKEN. IT HAS WORKED FOR ME."

VOICE: LUCKY OR NOT, THE ROCK COLLECTION OF OSCAR ROBERTSON UNDOUBTEDLY IS AMONG THE HEAVIEST COLLECTIONS OF ANY COLLECTOR ANYWHERE.

ANNCR: THAT'S THE STORY ON ONE OF THE LARGEST COLLECTIONS ANYWHERE, OSCAR ROBERTSON'S ROCK COLLECTION IN BALL GROUND, GEORGIA. THIS HAS BEEN COLLECTOR'S CORNER, NOTES ON THE WORLD OF COLLECTORS WHO BUY, SELL, AND ABOVE ALL, TREASURE THEIR COLLECTIONS. NEXT _____ ANOTHER LOOK INTO THE COLLECTORS CORNER.

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